

is a rare combination. Thank you to the Buffalo Bills. Thank you to the NFL and Roger Goodell. Thank you to all the student athletes and great champions in Buffalo and everywhere who pushed for this bill. They all made it happen.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, later today, I will meet with the President-elect's pick to serve as the next Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick of New York. I look forward to a fruitful and positive discussion. I have known Howard Lutnick for many years. He is an intelligent and capable man.

I think it is very important for New York and every other State and for America that the next Commerce Secretary is willing to build on the progress of the last few years and help the United States outcompete the Chinese Communist Party on AI, chip manufacturing, and in many other areas as well. It is especially important for States like New York and many others where we are bringing manufacturing back from overseas to strengthen domestic supply chains and our national security.

I can assure Howard Lutnick and all of the President-elect's nominees that we will give them fair and thorough consideration in the Senate. As I said in my letter to Senator THUNE last week, it is important that everyone goes through the standard process nominees have always had, including access to full FBI investigation materials, hearings with questions, and a vote on the floor.

I look forward to my conversation with Howard Lutnick later today.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. President, on WRDA, last night, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the 2024 Water Resources Development Act, named this year in honor of our dear retiring friend Senator CARPER, who has been a champion of this bill for so long. WRDA is one of Congress's most important bills for water infrastructure projects carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The bill passed with resounding bipartisan support—399 to 18—in the House, with all Democrats in favor.

This year's bill also includes reauthorization of the Economic Development Administration and several regional Commissions, making critical investments in infrastructure, workforce, and supply chains that will help the United States outcompete the rest of the world.

This bipartisan bill passed out of the EPW Committee earlier this year with unanimous support. The Senate is now working on a path to get WRDA and the EDA package cleared through this Chamber. It is my hope we can act on these bipartisan bills as soon as possible.

Reauthorizing WRDA opens the floodgates to authorize all sorts of water-related projects for our economy. It helps improve our ports and in-

land waterways. It helps communities protect against flood damage. It safeguards our delicate ecosystems, and it enhances access to public water.

WRDA is also critical for New York, where it improves, among other things, shoreline resiliency and flood protections from the Great Lakes all the way to New York City. The EDA authorization part of the bill will also direct more Federal investment to our most distressed regions and help them rebuild from economic hardship and from disasters.

WRDA and EDA are great examples of bipartisanship in action. So I hope we can reach agreement to get this important bill done as soon as we can.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS R. CARPER

Mr. President, about my dear friend Senator CARPER, this week, two of our longtime Democratic colleagues have delivered farewell addresses, Senators TESTER and CARDIN.

Today, another Senator, another dear friend, will deliver his farewell address: the senior Senator from Delaware—TOM CARPER. And when I say "dear friends" about these individuals, it is really true. It is not just verbiage. We are really friends as we have become in this caucus, and that is certainly true of TOM CARPER.

Last night was the annual Taste of Delaware event, one of my favorite events of the year, where everything that is amazing about Delaware is on full display. And if you spend just a few minutes there, you will notice something: The State of Delaware loves TOM CARPER, and TOM CARPER loves Delaware.

He hates being away from home, which is why half the time when I call him about all the issues that we care about together, he is on that Amtrak, hopping home to be with Martha and his family. He does it even on weekdays while we are in session.

Serving Delaware is all TOM knows. He did it first as State treasurer, then Congressman, then Governor, and then, for the last two decades, as Senator. If you put all these elected offices together, it means the people of Delaware have elected and reelected TOM a record 14 times into office, and he never lost an ounce of fight.

Here in the Senate, what a great ambassador he was for the First State. Our caucus relied on TOM's expertise, not just about Delaware, which, of course, we became quite familiar with due to his persistence but also on many different issues, especially when it came to the environment.

TOM is a climate warrior, plain and simple. Few Senators have fought as long or as hard to take action against the climate crisis as TOM has. As chair of the EPW Committee, he expertly negotiated many of the climate and clean energy investments we secured in recent years and had great input into the IRA, the Inflation Reduction Act.

And TOM was both idealistic and practical. When he worked on environmental issues, he knew how important

it was to maximize the amount of clean energy we produce, but at the same time, he knew how to talk to Members on the other side of the aisle, Members who might not agree with him on everything and get them to support a coalition that would support that legislation. He was amazing in action.

As the Senate's last Vietnam war veteran, TOM was also an unflinching champion for our servicemembers and their families. TOM will tell you that despite his time in elected office, his greatest privilege was serving in the Navy for 23 years. And not a day goes by when TOM isn't looking for ways to help our veterans in need.

He is an amazing guy. I even had a nickname for him. TOM and I love old lyrics from the fifties, sixties, and seventies, both songs, music, but TV shows, so his nickname, his initials, for me, were TC, Top Cat. He and I are among the few in this Chamber who remember the cartoon "Top Cat," but TOM CARPER was certainly a Top Cat in this body. Top Cat, you are great. I will miss you.

A final testament to TOM's willingness to go out of his way to help others, he was so enthusiastic about his successor, LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER. She got her start in politics as an intern in TOM's office, and when he knew he wasn't going to run, one of the first things he said to me was: Make sure you help LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER. She will be a great Senator. And we can begin to see that already.

So I can't think of a more appropriate way to conclude a long career in public service than by making sure your successor can continue your legacy. Senator Moynihan did that, in many ways, with me.

So to TOM, to Martha, the entire family, his two sons, thank you, thank you, thank you for your service. We will miss you very much.

And in the words a Navy man can appreciate: We wish you fair winds and following seas.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Illinois.

TRIBUTE TO SHERROD BROWN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, on the floor, I thanked five of my colleagues in the Senate who will be leaving at the end of this Congress. Today, I would like to thank three more.

If you read any profile on Senator SHERROD BROWN of Ohio, there is a good chance you will see the word "rumpled" in the description of his presentation before the Senate. A rumpled suit has become his trademark. In

fact, George Will once wrote that SHERROD “radiates rumplessness, even in a well-pressed suit.”

Such characterizations have never seemed to bother SHERROD because, you see, he didn’t come here to be a clothes horse or pose for GQ. He wouldn’t know what to do with a custom-made, clean-pressed suit every day at work.

SHERROD BROWN has spent 50 years in public office—50—including the last 18 years in the Senate. He is the kind of person who comes to the Senate ready to fight for people who don’t have lawyers and lobbyists to speak for them.

SHERROD grew up in Mansfield, OH, a town hit hard and early by the decline in American manufacturing. His family was comfortably middle class, but many of his friends and seatmates in school weren’t so lucky. When a factory in the town closed, his friends’ families struggled and worried. SHERROD has spent his life trying to make those families, and others like them, in a position to get a fair shake.

It is a noble kind of service to feel the burdens of others and to work to ease their load, even when you don’t need help yourself. SHERROD’s solidarity with others who needed help was evident when, for years, he even refused to take congressional health benefits until we passed the Affordable Care Act, which made them available to almost every American. He didn’t think it was right to accept that benefit as long as tens of millions of Americans were unable to obtain quality, affordable healthcare.

SHERROD has spent his life working for an economy and government that cares about the working class and invests in towns, factories, healthcare, and the potential of working families. He has fought for fair trade deals and opposed trade agreements that he thought shortchanged American workers, even when his opposition put him at odds with the President of his own party.

He insisted that the historic bipartisan infrastructure bill include a “Buy America” requirement, and he helped save the pensions of 1.5 million union members and retirees, with the so-called Butch Lewis Act, which I was proud to join him on.

Today, two huge new Intel computer chip factories are being built in Ohio in New Albany because SHERROD BROWN helped pass the Chips and Science Act.

As a long-time member and, since 2021, chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, he has worked to prevent the kinds of Wall Street recklessness and greed that crashed the global economy in 2008. He has fought for affordable housing and consumer protection, and against predatory lending and exorbitant junk fees. He has worked to hold executives of failed banks accountable and to make sure that AI and technology advances help consumers and aren’t misused to rig the system in favor of the wealthy.

He worked so hard and was so gratified by the child tax credit. I think it

was one of his proudest achievements, and he said as much.

In 2002, in the House, he voted against the Iraq war. I did, too, in the Senate. There weren’t many of us at the time, and it wasn’t a popular stand, but it was the right thing to do, and SHERROD knew it.

I am going to miss his gravelly, Tom Waits voice in this Chamber. I am going to miss the many stories he brought back about his wonderful wife Connie. She is a great writer and has been recognized beyond the United States in many places around the world for her insight and her writing. I wish the best to both of them. Their work here may be finished for the time being, but they have left a positive mark on America.

TRIBUTE TO JON TESTER

Mr. President, the big man from Big Sky Country, JON TESTER—before his election to the Senate, 18 years ago, Senator JON TESTER had never lived more than 2 hours away from his family’s wheat farm in Big Sandy, MT, the same farm his grandparents homesteaded more than a century ago.

JON started his campaign for the U.S. Senate traveling across the State on a farm tractor-trailer. And with his seven fingers, Roger Maris flattop, and scuffed size-12 cowboy boots, he has cut a singular figure in the Halls of Congress. He is a prairie pragmatist and a defender of programs that many rural Americans depend upon, such as market fairness for family cattle ranchers and rural community development efforts.

JON voted for the Affordable Care Act because it was right and because it is a lifeline to rural hospitals, to farmers, ranchers, small business owners, and others who need affordable, accessible healthcare coverage.

He has been a strong voice for Native Americans. Growing up, JON played “Taps” at the funerals of World War II veterans. It taught him, at an early age, that many veterans continue to pay a price for their service for the rest of their lives.

He gave a speech on the floor of the Senate, just a day or two ago. He pointed to that moment in the funeral service for former Senator Dan Inouye, a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, where, in Hawaii, JON was called on to play “Taps” for Senator Inouye. He said it was one of his proudest moments, and I am sure that is true.

When I think of the giants of the Senate, like Dan Inouye, I think about those like JON TESTER who, in his own way, showed his courage time and again.

As chair of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, JON TESTER has worked to strengthen VA healthcare and protect disability benefits for all veterans. He pushed the Senate to pass the historic PACT Act to provide healthcare for veterans who were sickened by exposure to burn pits and other toxins and the survivor benefits

for their spouses and young children. As of last week, the VA has approved more than 1.3 million claims under the PACT Act, including more than 51,000 veterans in my State of Illinois.

By the way, you likely have been hearing about self-professed “efficiency experts” combing through the Federal budget. Some of them have even called for the elimination of the Veterans Health Administration. They are wrong. They should listen to JON TESTER, a patriot, who it has been an honor to work with and count as a friend.

And you can’t close with JON without mentioning Shar. His wife Shar has been his partner in life and in politics and in every step they have taken together. It is a wonderful, loving, caring, inspiring couple. I am going to miss their physical presence, but their memories will live on in the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.

Mr. President, it was the evening of January 28, 2017, in the early days of the first Trump administration. Airports in Chicago and throughout the Nation were filled with people protesting the administration’s early ban on travelers from majority-Muslim nations. Among more than 100 protesters at the Philadelphia International Airport, one man stood out. Dressed in a tuxedo and tails, he had just attended a black-tie function when he heard about President Trump’s decision. That man was Senator BOB CASEY. He went directly to the airport.

As we all know, Senator CASEY isn’t usually so flashy as to wear a tux, but his principles guide him in everything he does. BOB CASEY is one of the most decent people I have ever served in Congress with. He is a bridge builder. He is committed to creating dialogue and finding common ground. He is the only—the only—Pennsylvania Democrat ever to serve three terms in the U.S. Senate.

He has been a strong voice for working families struggling to get by. He has a great family himself with Terese. Poor mothers and children, coal miners at risk, and others finally had an advocate here standing up for them in the U.S. Senate.

As chair of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, he has protected Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. He helped lower seniors’ cost for prescription drugs—a promise that was made years ago and finally kept, thanks to BOB CASEY. He has targeted scam artists who prey on seniors.

BOB’s father was a popular, two-term Pennsylvania Governor. And while Robert Casey, Sr., may have embedded the Casey name in Pennsylvania political life, ROBERT CASEY, Jr., through his decades of service, has added new honor to that name.

TRIBUTE TO MITT ROMNEY

Mr. President, finally, I want to say thank you to a departing Senator from across the aisle.

On the evening of January 6, 2021, many Senators in both political parties